

# The K.J.A. Bulletin

March  
1988





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## President's Message

Dear Members:

As the year 1988 begins, we assess our accomplishments in 1987, and in the meantime, we forge ahead with our programs for 1988. To mention some of our 1987 accomplishments: we held an annual Purim Party which was attended by many members, sent a Haggadah booklet and a tape for Passover, held two picnics, one in July and one in September, established an education fund in memory of late Dr. Baracat Massuda, sent out for the first time raffle tickets to every member for fund raising, and sponsored Mr. el-Kodsi's book which everybody should have received by now.

In 1988, we have a lot of activities which we are working on. On January 24, 1988, the Magnes Museum at Berkeley, California, will have an exhibit for the first time in the United States about Karaites. Our chief Rabbi in Israel, Hayim Halevi, will come to the U.S. and speak about the Karaites during the opening reception. On Saturday January 30, 1988, the KJA will have a reception honoring Rab Hayim.

On February 27, we will have the annual KJA party which is being organized by Fortune Lichaa.

We are also preparing for the election in late March /early April to replace some board members. You may recall in our last election, the vote was for all new board members. But this year, we will replace probably only four board members so that we ensure continuity of the KJA activities and maintain the experience and knowledge of the board.

During this upcoming election, we encourage more active participation from members living outside California so that their voices are heard and their ideas are implemented. If you are interested in getting involved and would like to represent your state, please write or call me. Also, if you are interested in publishing news about your family and friends or would like to write an article in the Bulletin, please contact me, Fred Lichaa, or any board member.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of our community who helped and supported the KJA during the past year and may God bless you.

Joe Abel  
President

#### WINNERS OF THE RAFFLE DRAWING

The drawing was held on Sunday November 1, 1987 in Foster City, California. Many families attended the event in hope of being the lucky ones. Refreshments and cookies were served before the drawings. The lucky tickets were picked by young children and were announced by the KJA president. The winner of the grand prize, .87 carat diamond, was Maurice El-Kodsi; the second prize, a Nikon camera, went to Joseph Moussa; and the third prize, \$200 cash went to Lieto Ferouz from Silver Spring, Maryland. Congratulations to the winners !!!!

There were 179 tickets purchased by 70 families. Mr. Maurice El-Kodsi has donated his grand prize to the KJA. We thank you, Maurice, for your valuable donations and support to the KJA. We would like also to thank everybody who participated in this important and successful fund raising event. Last but not least, our thanks and appreciation go to Mrs. Flore Mourad who donated the grand prize and Mr. Roger Pessah for his donation of a free mounting worth \$300.00.

Joe Abel



Selected topics from the KJA Board meetings:

- The Board discussed the upcoming events which included the upcoming visit of Chief Rabbi Hayim Halevi the Magnes Museum planning and the Annual KJA party.

- David Ovadia came up with a 1988 calendar of important dates that you will be able to detach from the bulletin and keep.

- Everyone should have received Mourad El kodsi book by now. If you or someone you know have not received it yet please contact KJA or Mourad at (716) 334-2413.

- The Board received at least two requests to mention that Mr. Szysman is pleading for a Karaite to be a Rabbi. He would like to teach that individual before his time comes.... He does not have much time left. (We have some funds if anyone is interested, contact Joe Pessah for further details.)

- Elie Moussa has informed the board that our current balance in all the accounts is \$205,000.00.

MAZAL TOV

Nessim and Rachel Ayun on the birth of their daughter Jessica, born December 14, 1987 California.

David and Suzanne Marzouk on the birth of their son born in January, 1988.

Dr. Benjamin and Myra Pessah on the birth of their son Ryan Joe Pessah, born February 13th, California

Mr. Claude Cohen wedded Nora Abdel Wahed on Thanksgiving weekend, 1987. Wedding held in Canada. We wish them the best and happiness.

TODAH RABBAH

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR HONORARY MEMBERS  
FOR THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS. THE NAMES BELOW  
REFLECT DONATIONS OF \$1000.00 OR MORE.

MR. & MRS. JACK EL GAMIL	of ILLINOIS
MR. & MRS. NABIH MANGOUBI	of ILLINOIS
MR. & MRS. WALTER MARZOUK	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS. ABRAHAM MASSOUDA	of MASSACHUSSETS
MR. & MRS. JOSEPH MOUSSA	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS. DAVID OVADIA	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS. AMIN PESSAH	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS JOSEPH PESSAH	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS. MAURICE PESSAH	of CALIFORNIA
MR. & MRS. YACOUB PESSAH	of CALIFORNIA
MRS. LEONIE SIAHOU	of CALIFORNIA

TODAH RABBAH TO OUR SINCERE CONTRIBUTORS. EVENTHOUGH  
ONE NAME IS MENTIONED BELOW, KJA THANKS THE ENTIRE  
FAMILY.

ABDALLAH SOLOMON	ABDELWAHED SARINA	ABEL JOSEPH
ABELL DAVID	ADJMI SARAH	AFRANGUI FRED
ALLEN VICTOR	ASLAN MARIE	BERENT DAVID
BIGIO RALPH	BRIDGMAN DAVID	CLARY BOB
COHEN BENOIT	COHEN JACOB	DABBAH DAVID
DABBAH ADEL	DABBAH JOSEPH	DANIEL ABRAHAM
DARWISH SABET	DARWISH ZAKI	DARWISH GERMAINE
DARWISH MAURICE	DUBNER RICHARD	DUGGAL VIJAY
EL GAZZAR SABET	EL KODSI MOURAD	EL KODSI FARAG
EL TAHAN HOSNI	ELGAMIL ABE	ELGAMIL RACHEL
ELGAZZAR ELIE	ELGAZZAR SOL	ELKODSI MOUSSA
ELKODSI ZAKI	ESKINAZI NADIA	EZIAL DENISE
FEROUZ LIETO	GAMIL ALBERT	GAZZAR ALBERT
HABIB AZIE	HAFEZ ISAK	HARON JOSEPH
HARTMAN NADIA	HEFEZ YOMTOV	HELMY AYMAN
ISAAC ELIE	ISAAC JOSEPH	JACOB ZAKI
KHEDER EMIEL	KHEDER ELIE	KHEDER JOSEPH
KHEDR MARC	KODSI BAROUKH	KODSI YOUSSEF
LESHAA MOUNIR	LEVI VICTOR	LEVY ABRAHAM
LEVY IBRAHIM	LEVY JACK	LEVY DANIEL
LICHA JOSEPH	LICHA VIVIANE	LICHA DR LEON
LICHA ZAKI	LICHA ABRAHAM	LICHA MOUSSA
LICHA YOUSEF	LICHA RACHEL	LICHA JOSEPH
LICHA MAURICE	LICHA LEONIE	LICHA MARCELLE
LICHA FRED	LICHA ABRAHAM	LICHA ALLEN
LICHA MARK	LICHA BENOIT	LICHA MOURAD
LICHA YOUSSEF	LISHA MARIE	MANGOUBI SABET
MANGOUBI DR. ELIE	MANGOUBI SABET	MARSA LOUIS
MARZOUK LIETO	MARZOUK S.	MARZOUK JACK
MARZOUK MOURAD	MARZOUK SUZETTE	MARZOUK AMIN
MARZOUK MOUNIR	MARZOUK ALFRED	MARZOUK FRED
MASLIAH BAROUKH	MASLIAH CLEMENT	MASLIAH YACOB
MASSOUDA VICTORIA	MASSOUDA W.	MASSOUDA HABIB

TODAH RABBAH (continued)

MASSOUDA G.Y.	MASSOUDA HABIB	MASSOUDA SUZAN
MASSOUDA BENOIT	MASSOUDA KAMAL	MASSOUDA FLORA
MASSUDA EUGENIE	MASSUDA DAVID	MASSUDA JOSEPH
MASSUDA LIETTO	MASSUDA ABRAHAM	MASSUDA BARRY
MENACHE ALFRED	MENACHE LILY	MENACHE LEONIE
MENASHA MOUSSA	MENASHA REGINA	MERON FRANCES
MESSAFI	MORAN BILL	MORAN KAMY
MOURAD BERRY		
MOURAD ZAKI	MOURAD ALBERT	MOURAD FLORE
MOURAD MARIE	MOURAD AZIZ	MOURAD HENRY
MOURAD HARRY	MOURAD MARTIN	MOURAD TEWFIK
MOUSSA ELIE	MOUSSA JACOB	MOUSSA DAVID
MOUSSA LOUISE	NOUNOU ELIE	NOUNOU PAUL
OHAYON MAURICE	OVADIA JOSEPH	OVADIA ALBERT
OVADIA FRED	OVADIA FRED	OVADIA ALLEN
OVADIA ABBY	OVADIA ABRAHIM	OVADIA JOSEPH
OVADIA JOE	OVADIA ISAAC	OVADIA MORRIS
OVADIA ALBERT	OVADIA JACK	PERLMAN CLAIRE
PERRY SHLOMO	PESSAH BENJAMIN	PESSAH RACHELLE
PESSAH SARINA	PESSAH HENRY	PESSAH ROGER
PESSAH ELIAHOU	RASSON JOE	RASSON MAURICE
ROSNER VICTOR	SABET ABDOU	SABET S.A.
SADDIK MICHAEL	SADDIK ABRAHAM	SALAH AIMEE
SALEH VITA	SALEH FRED	SALEH ALBERT
SCOTT DAVID	SELIM IBRAHIM	SELIM TOM
SELIM SOL	SELIM ZAKI	SERGANI ZAKI
SHAMMAS ROGER	SHAMMAS ELIE	SINICK RALPH
SOLIMAN ZAKI	TAHAN CECILIA	TAHAN SIMON
TSOFFAR RUTH	VAEDE ROGER	WAHED BAROUKH
WAHED SARINA	WAHED DANIEL	YEHOUDA LEON
YOUNES DR. SUSAN	YERAKA SARAH	YOMTOV ABE
YOMTOV AMIR	ZAKARIA GAD	

TODAH RABBAH TO MR. & MRS. ELIE MASSOUDA FOR TWO MORE BEAUTIFUL CARPETS USED FOR OUR MONTHLY PRAYER.



# Z E K H E R

The names below were remembered during our monthly Saturday and special prayers. KJA thanks everyone who contributed in their beloved memory. If we made an error (misspelling or left a person out), excuse us and let us know, we will be glad to correct it.

LILIAN EL TAHAN BAT SHALOM PESSAH  
ALAIN BEN YEHOUDA HA COHEN  
ESTHER FARAG EL SERGANI  
YOUSSEF IBRAHIM SOLIMAN  
TEWFIK EL GAZZAR  
RACHEL EL GAZZAR  
ELIE AMIN LICHAA  
ZAKI LICHAA ISHAK  
JACQUES LIETO MANGOUBI  
IVONNE ZAKI LICHAA  
FLORE SHABETAI DARWISH  
LIETO IBRAHIM MARZOUK  
MARY IBRAHIM DARWISH  
ABDOU SHABETAI DARWISH  
YOSSEF BEN YACQUB PESSAH & ZOGATO  
YOSSEF BEN MOSHE PESSAH & ZOGATO  
NEAMAN BEN YACQUB HAIINA  
MOSHE BEN YOSSEF PESSAH  
HAYIM YACQUB EL GAMIL  
IBRAHIM YOUSSEF ABDEL WAHED  
ESTHER YOUSSEF ABDEL WAHED  
LEON MOUSSA DARWISH  
SUZANNE MATATTIA  
YACQUB ELIAHOU EL GAZZAR  
SARAH BAT AMIN MENASHE  
YOUSSEF MOUSSA MARZOUK & ZOGATO  
ELIE YOUSSEF MOUSSA MARZOUK  
FARAG YESOUA BEN OVADIA  
LOUNA BAROUKH COHEN  
RACHEL BAROUKH COHEN  
YACQUB BEN ISHAK LICHAA  
LOUNA BAT BAROUKH COHEN

DR. BARAKAT MASSUDA  
ZAKI HABIB LICHAA  
FOUAD DABBAH  
AMIN A HABIB  
GABRIEL AZOUBEL  
MAURICE SALEH  
LOUNA YOUNES  
HABIB YOUNES  
MALAKA TAWIL  
VITA LICHAA  
VITA YOUSSEF EL TAWIL  
AZIZA ELIAHOU ASLAN  
ZAKI BAROUKH COHEN

RAHEL BAT HEFEZ PESSAH  
RAHEL BAT YACQUB KAHIL  
JACK SELIM SHAMUEL  
AZIZA ABRAHAM MASSUDA  
MOUSSA ABRAHAM MASSUDA  
FLORE BAT SCIAMMAS  
YOUSSEF MOUSSA SALEH  
EDWARD JAY SALEH  
JACQUES SELIM SHOMWEL  
FARAG SELIM SHOMWEL  
YOUSSEF LIETO MOURAD  
KHOMESA  
YOUSSEF MOUSSA MARZOUK  
ELIE YOUSSEF MARZOUK  
YACQUB MOURAD MARZOUK  
ESTHER DAOUD MASSUDA  
YOUSSEF BEN MORDECHAI  
NELLY LIETO MASSUDA

RAHEL BAT BAROUKH COHEN  
DAVID ABRAHAM EL GAMIL  
RAHEL YOUSSEF LICHAA  
BAROUKH IBRAHIM SIAHOU  
CHALOM IBRAHIM MASSOUDA  
FORTUNEE DAOUD LICHAA  
YAFFEE CHALOM MASSOUDA  
DAVID CHALOM MASSOUDA  
MAURICE CHALOM MASSOUDA  
FARAG YOUSSEF SALEH  
GRACIA FARAG NOUNA  
ESTHER BAROUKH MASSUDA  
RACHEL HABIB MASSUDA  
JOSEPH BAROUKH MASSUDA  
LIETO BAROUKH MASSUDA  
ZAKI BAROUKH LICHAA  
ESTHER ELIAHOU NONO  
LIETO YOUSSEF EL KODSI  
ELIE BAROUKH LICHAA  
BAROUKH LICHAA  
IBRAHIM BAROUKH LICHAA  
MASAAD MASSUDA  
SUZANE BAT MATATTIA MARZOUK  
ESTHER YOUSSEF ABDALLAH EL AFRANGUI  
YESQUA & MOSHE & ISHAK & YOUSSEF OVADIA  
HABIB LIETO BAROUKH MASSUDA  
FORTUNEE LIETO LICHAA  
MOURAD YOUSSEF DABBAH  
DAVID YOUSSEF DABBAH  
RENEE SHALOM DABBAH  
MARIE ELIAHOU LICHAA  
REGINA ELIAHOU LICHAA  
YACOB KAHALA  
SELIM KAHALA  
FORTUNEE DAVID DABBAH  
FOUAD DAVID DABBAH  
REGINA YACOB SHIMON

MOUSSA PESSAH  
HABIB YOUNES  
MOUSSA MASSUDA  
MATTATIA MARZOUK  
FARAG ASLAN  
RACHEL DARWISH  
ZAKI ELIAHOU LICHAA  
RACHEL HABIB MASSUDA  
ESTHER HABIB MASSUDA  
REGINA ISHAK LICHAA  
DAVID ISHAK LICHAA  
MAURICE HABIB ISHAK  
LOUNA ABDALLAH  
FARAG YOUSSEF MASLIAH  
VITA YOUSSEF MASLIAH  
GRACIA FARAG NOUNA  
ELIAHOU NONO  
REGINA ELIAHOU  
YOUSSEF ELIAHOU NONO  
AMIN EZIAL  
VOGHAYA AMIN EZIAL  
HAFEZ EZIAL  
IBRAHIM EZIAL  
ZAKI EZIAL  
SABET EZIAL  
YOUSSEF EZIAL  
AVIVA EZIAL  
NINA EZIAL  
MASSAD NONO  
AZIZA NONO  
YOUSSEF KHEDR MATOUK  
KHEDR HAYIM MATOUK  
KAMAR SALEH  
NELLY EL GAMIL  
FORTUNEE MOURAD



Joe Abel, KJA President, presents an appreciation plaque to Chief Rabbi Hayim Halevi

Our Chief Rabbi Hayim Halevi from Israel was a guest speaker at the opening reception of the first Karaite exhibition in the U.S. at Magnes Museum in Berkley. He made several lectures at the U.C. Berkley, to students and met the rabbis of the Bay Area.

Following his visit to San Francisco Bay Area, he visited Los Angeles and met with the community. His last stop was with the community in Chicago.

KJA hopes to have a special bulletin dedicated to the Magnes Museum exhibits. Two volunteers who have expressed this great interest are Joe Rasson and Maurice Darwish.

We also hope to have a VCR of the Magnes Museum exhibit and the lecture that the Chief Rabbi gave in the reception dedicated to him.



#### LOS ANGELES:

Jeffrey Licha had a Bar Mitzvah on December 19, 1987. Congratulation Jeffrey on a job well done.

Jeffrey is the son of Mark and Vivian Licha.

Many people flew from all over the states, and some drove the 6 hours trip from San Francisco to share this joyous occasion with the Licha's. It was a very good occasion for people to meet and see each other.

We thank all the families that made our visit enjoyable and most welcome.

Once again congratulations to Jeffrey Licha.

Fortune Lichaa



## K J A   N E E D S   Y O U R   S U P P O R T

We would like to invite you to share the responsibility of publishing the bulletin. Your comments, ideas, suggestions, criticism and your jokes are needed. If you are lazy to write then please call your state representative or any board member... or send us your ideas on a cassette.

You can make a difference to the success of this bulletin, so please help.

For those of you who have moved without notifying us or are planning to move, we urge you to send us your new address to keep our mailing list up to date.

KJA receives many letters from parents of young teenagers asking KJA to:

Make available a list of available bachelors, they would like their kids to stay in the Jewish faith.

Some are asking us to make a party were all the young people would get a chance to meet each other.

Some are asking us to print their names in the bulletin and publish their picture.

If anyone would like to introduce him or herself please send a note to KJA or call Fred Lichaa at 415 341-4725.

## RECIPE COLLECTION

The KJA is preparing a most unique and tempting COOKBOOK. The cookbook will contain our favorite Karaite recipes as well as other recipes you enjoy and would like to share. The book will preserve our culinary skills and heritage and will be a valuable asset to everybody and to our future generations.

We would like you to submit three or four of your favorite recipes so you too can be represented in this memorable collection. If you think your recipe is too simple or common, we would still like to receive it. Your magic touch makes a whole world of difference in the recipe.

Please neatly print or type your recipe on the form in the opposite page. The categories are:

APPETIZERS & BEVERAGES  
SOUPS, SALADS & VEGETABLES  
MAIN DISHES & CASSEROLES  
MEAT, POULTRY & FISH  
BREADS & ROLLS  
CAKES, COOKIES & CANDY  
OTHER FAVORITES

Please return your recipes by February 29, 1988 to:

Amira Abel  
28 Saba Court  
San Ramon, California 94583

Thank you in advance for your participation in preparing this great memorable Karaite cookbook.

# RECIPE COLLECTION SHEET

(one recipe per form, please make copies of the form or write on a sheet of paper for additional recipes)

CATEGORY \_\_\_\_\_

SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_ TEL \_\_\_\_\_

RECIPE TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

## INGREDIENTS

[illegible]

### DIRECTIONS

[illegible]

**RECIPE COLLECTION SHEET**

(one recipe per form, please make copies of the form or write on a sheet of paper for additional recipes)

CATEGORY \_\_\_\_\_

SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_ TEL \_\_\_\_\_

RECIPE TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

## INGREDIENTS

[illegible]

### DIRECTIONS

[illegible]



**THE KARAITE CODICES**  
**BY**  
**MOURAD EL-KODSI**

This article provides some history about the Karaite codices and especially the Moshe Ben-Asher codex which is currently in Cairo, Egypt.

**WHAT IS A CODEX**

A codex is a Bible written with the Masorah. The Masorah refers to "all extra textual signs and notations added to the consonantal text of the Bible." The scrolls of Scripture which all Jews read in synagogues have no vowel points or punctuation of any kind.

The earliest Hebrew codices are dated back to the ninth century. That coincides with the rise of the Karaite sect and the beginning of its ascendancy.

A codex could be scribed by one person, punctuated or vocalized by another, then masoreted by a third one. In several cases a codex was written, vocalized, and masoreted by the same person.

Members of the Asher family (Moshe Ben-Asher and his son Aaron ben Moshe Ben-Asher) were considered the most reliable masoretes (persons who write the Masorah).

Moses ben David Ben-Naftali was also a very well-known Karaite masorete. To the researchers and scholars, he was a rival to the Ashers.

Usually each codex has its colophon. A colophon is a summary stating who wrote the codex, vocalized, and masorated it; when and where it was completed; who commissioned it to be done; to whom it was given after its completion, as well as other important information.

### **BEN-ASHER CODEX**

- It is the oldest dated Biblical manuscript in existence from the middle ages. It was completed in the year 827 after the destruction of the second temple, or in 894 C.E.
- It was written in the city of Ma'azia in Tabariyah.
- Moshe Ben-Asher wrote it to fulfill a request of the Karaite Ya'bes ben Shlemo al-Babli who paid all expenses and donated the codex to the Karaites of Jerusalem.
- It contains the prophets from Joshua to Malachi.
- It has 567 pages and the dimensions of a typical page are 16 by 15 inches.
- The Codex is a key manuscript in the history of Paleography and Codicology.
- The Codex is still in a reasonable good physical condition considering that it has been written over one thousand years ago, yet no doubt, its pages need professional treatment before it is too late for restoration.
- The Codex stands as a monument in both the history of the Bible and the history of the Hebrew manuscript illumination.

- The Ben-Asher codex was captured among other codices when Baldwin the crusader captured Jerusalem in 1099. It was later redeemed and subsequently donated to the Karaites of Cairo by David, the son of Yefet al-Iskandari.

It is not known when David donated the Codex to the Karaites of Egypt ; however, according to words of mouth among elder Karaites, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (1169-1193) helped the Karaites repossess the Codex. If this is the case, then the Codex was donated to the Karaites of Egypt around the end of the 12th century and remained in their possession since then.

Hakham Tobia Leve Babovitch, the chief Rabbi of the Karaite community of Egypt (1934-1956), wrote an article in al-Kalim (a Karaite magazine) #68 on December 1, 1947 in which he translated the colophon at the top of the first page of the book of Malachi. Tobia stated that David, the son of Yefet, a wealthy Karaite known as al-Iskandari, after having been saved from great difficulties had donated the Codex to the Karaites of Cairo to read it on Sabbath days and on fast days. It is a custom for the Karaites to donate a scroll "Sepher" to the synagogue to commemorate a happy occasion.

#### **WHO EXAMINED THE BEN-ASHER CODEX**

Modern Western knowledge of the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex began when Jacob Saphir (1822-1885), a writer and a teacher from Jerusalem, visited the Rab Simhah synagogue, the main Karaite synagogue, saw the Codex, and wrote about it.

In 1888, Elkan Nathan Adler visited the Rab Simhah synagogue in Harat al-Yahud al-Qarra'in Cairo. He referred to the Codex as "the most curious of all Karaite manuscripts."

In 1906, an Ashkenazi Rabbi from Cairo examined the Codex in the Karaite synagogue at the request of Rabbi Pessah Finfer from Vilna.

The well-known Orientalist Richard Gottheil visited Cairo in 1905 and made the most detailed account of the Codex up to this time.

On May 20, 1929, Hakham Hayyim Nahum, the chief Rabbi of the Rabbanite community in Egypt, visited the Raab Simhah synagogue and spent a good time with his friend, Hakham Abraham Kohen, the chief Rabbi of the of the Karaite community in Cairo. They both examined the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex as well as other priceless manuscripts.

In the 1930's the Spanish government requested photographing the Codex, and a permission was granted.

IN 1944, the Hebrew University took a complete set of photos of the Codex. They left a copy of the negatives with the Gabbay of the synagogue of Moshe al-Dar'i who kept it with the Codex in the same vault.

Paul Kahle saw the Codex for the first time on Monday February 20, 1956. It was a fascinating experience for him. Kahle believed that the Moshe Ben-Asher's manuscript was an ideal and model codex.

On Tuesday September 1, 1960, Richard Ettinghausen of the Smithsonian Institute visited Moshe al-Dar'i synagogue accompanied by the Gabbay David Lichaa and the President of the Karaite Community, Jacques Mangubi. Mr. Ettinghausen examined the Codex and took some pictures. He left a very kind note expressing his admiration of the Codex and the Karaite place of divine service.

Apparently, the photos that Mr. Ettinghausen took were not successful. A photographer from the American Embassy in Cairo was asked to take another set of



photos of the Codex as well as a photo of a decree of the Fatimide Sultan al-Zahir.

About a year later, the acting Hakham Mourad Haroun was falsely accused of hiding gold in the Moshe al-Dar'i synagogue. The government seized the opportunity to search inside the synagogue and to take an inventory of all the codices and other manuscripts that were in the vault at the time. From that time, and because of the tense situation between Egypt and Israel, no attempts were made to see or examine the Codex.

In December of 1972, Leila Avrin from the University of Michigan went to Cairo and spent some time studying very carefully the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex in preparation for her degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In 1974, she submitted her dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirement to earn that degree. The subject was "the Illumination in the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex."

Soon after the peace agreement between Sadat of Egypt and Began of Israel was reached, a competition began among Israeli institutions and overseas Jewish communities for access to the priceless Karaite manuscripts in the Moshe al-Dar'i synagogue.

Among the first to visit the synagogue was rabbi B. Helman. In March 1979, he wrote an article in the Hadassah magazine about the Karaites of Cairo and the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex. The Article is very well-written and indicates that Rabbi Helman did some research on the Codex earlier. The article was documented by a beautiful photo of a page of the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex as well as photos of other related items.

The article must have had a strong impact on members of the Jewish intelligence, needless to say that at that time the Jewish opinion was ready to take an

action regarding the Karaite codices.

During the Summer of 1979, Mr. Greville Janner, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, visited Cairo and met with Sadat and obtained from him permission to have the Ben-Asher Codex sent to England for restoration. Mr. Janner was fascinated with the Codex but admired more another codex written by Samuel ben Jacob, a well-known Karaite scribe.

In the Article that appeared in Jewish Chronicle on January 4, 1980, detailing the visit, there was no mention of the rightful owner of the Codex, the Karaites. The article mentioned that the Codex belonged not only to Egypt but to the Jewish people as well.

In 1980, Beit-Arie, director of the library of the University of Jerusalem, accompanied by two Karaites from Ramleh Israel, visited the Moshe al-Dar'i synagogue. He and another professor who came with him examined and took inventory of all the codices in the vault. Less than one year later, the Samuel ben Jacob Codex was missing. Rumors point out that it is now in the possession of a manuscripts collector from Long Island N.Y.

Under The title "Jewish Sect in Cairo Fights Removal of its Torah," an article written by Earleen Tatro appeared in the New York Times on Sunday January 20, 1980. The reporter interviewed three of the remaining members of the Karaite community in Cairo and echoed their views about the codex as well as other topics without adding any comments or information of her own. I am sure that the writer had no knowledge of anything in this subject. It is even a shame to mention that she started her article by stating that "the founders of the sect" gathered near the sea of Galilee and compiled a brilliantly illuminated Torah that found its way to Cairo. What a fiction !

A week later, The Jewish Week-American Examiner published an article by Bernard Postal entitled "Karaites Stand Guard over a 9th Century Torah." There is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Postal had no idea of what he wrote about. He was confused and mixed up between the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex and the Aleppo Codex that he did not know which is which !

The information in the article is misleading, but I am sure that the writer himself was not aware of that. The writer mentioned that the Torah came to Cairo as a booty of war in the 11th century, and it returned to the property of Jews again in 1375 when Maimonides son, Rabbi David brought it to Aleppo, Syria. Part of it was burned by anti-Zionist Muslims in 1947, but the bulk was rescued. Later, it was returned to Cairo where the Karaites kept it under lock and key.

The Codex did not come to Cairo as a booty of war, Maimonides died in 1204 and according to the article, David returned it to the Jews in 1375. How could that be? In the meantime David is the grandson, not the son of Maimonides. The Codex was taken to Aleppo by the great grandson of Maimonides al-Nagid Abraham. The Codex after being rescued in 1947 did not return to Cairo. It was taken to Israel. This is the Aleppo Codex not the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex that the Karaites have in Cairo.

In the same Year, two professors came from Fribourg Switzerland: Dominique Barthelemy and Othmar Keel, a third Alber de Pury from the University of Neuchatel, and a fourth one, Jean de Waard from the University of Strasbourg. All of them are professors of "Exegetical of the old Testament." They expressed their strong objection against depriving the Karaites of the world from their most sacred object: the Moshe Ben-Asher Codex.

## OTHER CODICES

A second important codex in Leningrad is Codex B 19a which is now persevered in the Firkovitch Collection in the Leningrad Public Library.

It was acquired along with many valuable documents, manuscripts, and other things from the Rab Simhah synagogue, the main Karaite synagogue in Cairo, for pennies by Abraham Firkovitch towards the end of the 19th century. It is very likely that Firkovitch was able to put his hand on this codex because the Karaites at the time had another similar one.

Both codices were written, vocalized, and masoreted by Samuel ben Jacob, a well known Karaite, in 1008 or 1009 in Egypt.

Its colophon indicates that Samuel copied this Codex from a codex prepared many years earlier by Aaron Ben Moshe Ben-Asher.

Professor Paul Kahle selected the text and the Masorah of this Codex as the most accurate accessible Ben-Asher text for the third and the fourth edition of Rudolph Kittel's Biblia Hebraica for the years 1937 and 1968 respectively.

The British museum has an important Karaite manuscript known as British Manuscript or 4445. It is considered as an "authentic Ben-Asher Codex." It is a Pentateuch (Genesis 34:20 to Deuteronomy 1:33). It contains 186 pages which measure 16.5 by 13 inches. Its colophon is missing and that makes it difficult to know exactly when it was written. Yet from the style of it handwriting, it is believed that it was completed during the first half of the 10th century.

The fourth and the most important of all the codices is the Aleppo Codex. When it was completed, it contained the entire Bible. Its pages measure 13 by

10.5 inches. The Codex was written by Solomen Ben-Buya'a. Aaron ben Moshe Ben-Asher completed its vowels and Masorah.

M. H. Goshen-Gottstein in his book The Authenticity of the Aleppo Codex characterizes this achievement as "The ideal and model Codex, the final crown of the achievement of generations of masoretes."

We should mention here that Goshen-Gottstein is among the few who deny the affiliation of the Ashers with Karaism.

Shortly after it was written, it was donated to the Karaites of Jerusalem. It stayed in their possession until the Crusaders seized it along with other manuscripts, according to Paul Kahle. In 1106, the Karaites of Jerusalem redeemed it and sent it to the Karaites of Fustat (old Cairo).

In the beginning of the 14th century, the great grandson of Maimonides al-Nagid Abraham was able to convert the Karaite congregation of Fustat to Rabbanism. As a result, he deprived that congregation from the Codex which he brought to a Sephardic congregation in Aleppo where they kept it in complete secrecy. Very few scholars and visitors were allowed to see it. Paul Kahle was allowed to copy its colophon which indicates that Aaron Ben-Asher vocalized and Masorated it. This is the Codex that Maimonides consulted and copied with his own hands all of its Pentateuch. At that time, it was still in the hands of the Karaite congregation of Fustat.

In 1947, the Codex was the victim of anti-Zionism riots. Parts of it were lost forever. The rest was rescued, and it is now in the Hebrew University.

These are only a few of the many Karaite codices that are now mostly in the European Museums and libraries.

### References

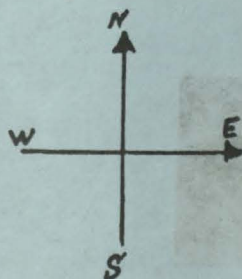
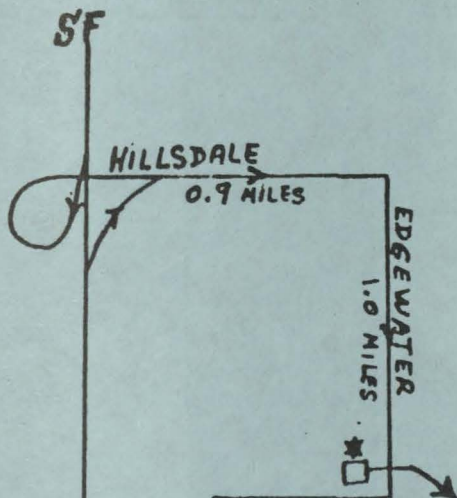
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Mourad El-Kodsi



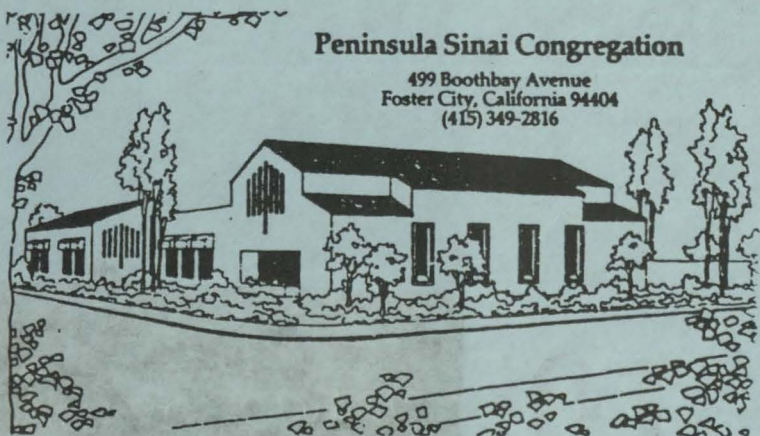
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